

Day 16

HALLWAYS: Opening Our Doors to Help Our Neighbors

“Those of Us who are strong and able in the faith need to step in and lend a hand to those who falter, and not just do what is most convenient for us. Strength is for service, not status. Each one of us needs to look after the good of the people around us, asking ourselves, ‘How can I help?’ That’s exactly what Jesus did. He didn’t make it easy for himself by avoiding people’s trouble, but waded right in and helped out. ‘I took on the troubles of the troubled,’ is the way Scripture puts it. Even if it was written in Scripture long ago, you can be sure it’s written for us.”

Romans 15:1-4 MSG

Richard Dees starts this day’s lesson with a story that I am sure that you have heard. In August of 2008, a young woman was stabbed to death in a New York City apartment complex. While her ex-boyfriend was stabbing her, she repeatedly called for help. Neighbors reported hearing her screams. No one came to help her. Do you think you would have helped? I hope so.

How we react in times of crisis or when we witness people in need is addressed in the Bible. Jesus calls us to love our neighbors, to help those who lie in our path, whether they are struggling with relationship issues, loneliness, grief, or depression. However, in today’s world, we sometimes don’t even know our own neighbors. With new technology like cell phones, email, air travel, twitter, and facebook, the definition of neighbor becomes hard to figure out. Who are your neighbors? Who are the people in your hallways? How can you use your gifts to lend a hand and help them?

No matter what your job is, no matter whether you are extroverted or not, no matter whether you are a leader or a follower, you have the opportunity to serve God by serving others. Jesus turned to his Father when he needed help, and you can also turn to your heavenly Father when you need help, too. It won’t be easy to be God’s servant, but the path is clear. We are meant to minister to others.

Richard Dees also addresses the issue of “So how can I minister to others when I so need someone to minister to me?” Lots of people feel this way. He talks about his friend Louise who was unhappy about moving to an assisted-living facility. At first she refused to get to know her new neighbors. She only went out on Sundays to go to church. One Sunday she prayed to God for help. She then read in her church’s bulletin about forming small groups for Bible study and fellowship. She felt called to try to form one. She began traveling down the hallways in her assisted-living center, looking for people to join her Bible study group. Before long, Louise became a good neighbor and helped herself in the process. Richard says “the greatest blessing always is ours when we seek to bless others.” So again he asks, “Who lives in your hallways?”

As you walk your hallways, be ready. Be aware of those around you – is there someone who needs helping?